291 speaking. (1) Is this custom in some way related to modesty? The
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1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

[606] same question may be raised with respect to another strict rule of decorum which forbids a man to look his mother-in-law in the face. (2)

2. For details concerning this custom, see Chapter VI, Article V, 1.

It can readily be answered in the affirmative. (3)

3. Nevertheless, see Chapter X, Article II, 3.

784 The rule of decorum which forbids a man to sit down on a
516 seat where a woman is seated who is not his wife seems to me also to be dictated by sexual modesty. On the other hand, stepping over the seat under such circumstances has nothing whatever to do with this feeling. The purpose of this practice is to enable the person seated (regardless of sex) to avoid the evil repercussions of a charm or magic spell in his or her possession. (4)

4. Contrary to the explanation given by Jadot in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge (Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

291 Is the native ashamed to show his nakedness? Let us beware
834 of answering this question in general terms. In order to have an idea of the situation which is sufficiently clear and precise, various cases and circumstances must be taken into account.

1) First of all it can be stated that in the normal course of daily living the Nkundó, men as well as women, do all they can to hide their genital organs. That is to say that basically they are